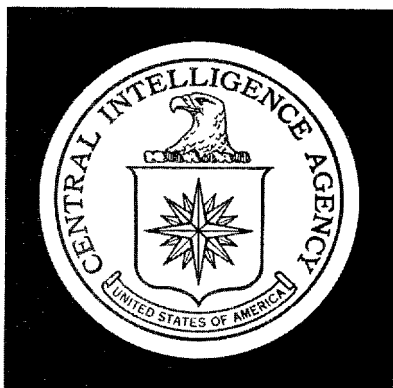


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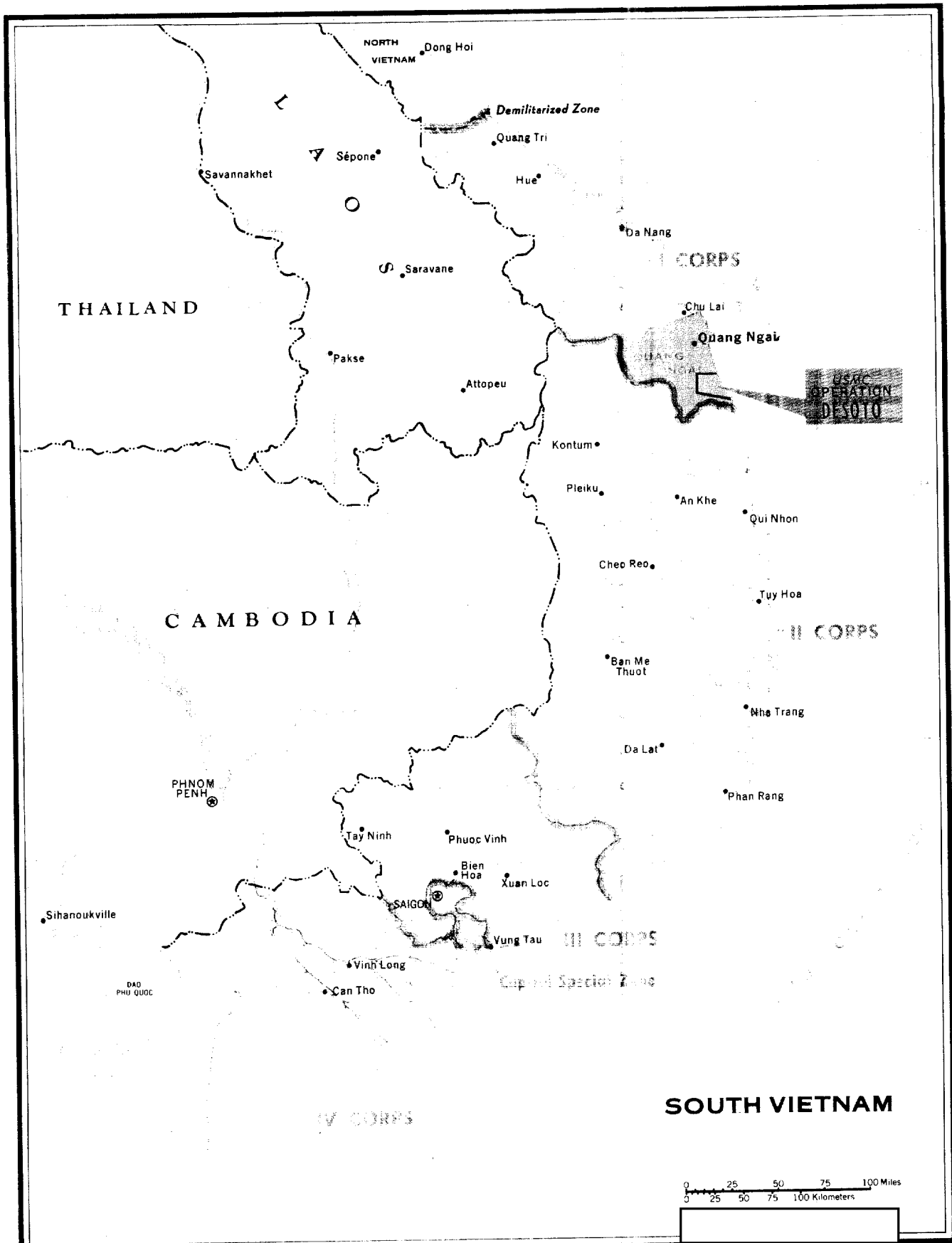
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: Chief of State Thieu is increasingly giving the impression that he may seek the presidency under the new constitution.

Last week, Thieu made a widely publicized tour of the delta provinces, speaking to a variety of civilian and military groups and doling out welfare funds and land titles. On 30 January, he held a major reception for the press in Saigon at which he spoke optimistically of the prospects for early victory in the war, and for bringing peace and prosperity to the Vietnamese people.

Linking General Co's recent dismissal to the "problem of corruption," Thieu told reporters that a month-long campaign was being launched to clean up the military and civil administration. He also described the Vietnamese army's new pacification mission as "the most important task" at this time in defeating the Communists and shortening the war. Although he brushed aside suggestions that he was already on the campaign trail, Thieu's remarks suggest both an effort to identify himself with potentially popular campaign issues of peace and anti-corruption, and a bid to become the military's candidate.

Thieu's current behavior may hasten a confrontation with Premier Ky to reach agreement on a military candidate. Police Director General Loan and other Ky supporters have claimed that Ky definitely aspires to head the future government, but that he will defer to Thieu if the latter decides to run.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Sporadic heavy fighting has occurred in a US Marine operation in Quang Ngai Province.

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Marines participating in the one-battalion Operation DESOTO encountered a well-entrenched Communist force in the coastal lowlands about 25 miles south of Quang Ngai city on 30 January. Tactical air strikes, artillery, and naval gunfire have been called in to support the Marines. Contact was broken yesterday.

Preliminary casualty reports from the operation list 11 Americans killed and 47 wounded, and enemy losses of 37 killed. Total enemy strength in the general area is estimated at 4,750 men.

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Communist China: Maoist propaganda media have added Shantung, in north China, to the growing number of provinces where opposition strength is acknowledged.

Peking announced on 29 January that pro-Mao "revolutionaries" had taken over the important port of Tsingtao, but admitted that the Shantung provincial committee was still in the hands of "bourgeois reactionary" party leaders. The next day Tsingtao "revolutionaries" declared in a broadcast that they would refuse to carry out directives of the provincial committee.

Recent posters and broadcasts suggest that Maoist leaders mistrust some elements of the Tsinan Military Region, which controls army units in Shantung Province. The announcement of the Tsingtao take-over claimed that it had taken place on 22 January and that army units had played a significant role, especially in their support of "revolutionary" attempts to seize the Tsingtao radio station. Tsingtao radio did not announce the take-over until 30 January, however. This unexplained eight-day delay suggests that army support was not very vigorous. A poster seen in Peking last week claimed that the now disgraced Ho Lung, a member of the Military Affairs Commission, exercised important influence in the Tsinan Military Region. In addition, the first secretary of the Shantung provincial committee is concurrently the political commissar of the Tsinan Military Region.

A Red Flag editorial broadcast on 30 January again revealed the existence of serious divisions and "errors" within pro-Mao forces. The editorial, acknowledging that many "revolutionaries" were not "mature," ordered them "not to attack each other," implying that such conflict has become commonplace. The editorial made sweeping--though ill-defined--charges that pro-Mao forces were guilty of such faults as "departmentalism,

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small group mentality, decentralization, extreme democratization, freedomism, subjectivism, and individualism." The day before People's Daily reprinted a 1929 article by Mao -- "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party"--discussing just such intraparty problems. The article was written when Mao was attempting to gain control over the military, suggesting that he sees some similarities in the present situation.

According to posters seen in Peking, elementary and junior high schools through China will reopen on 9 February. They were closed late last spring to allow students to engage in "revolutionary" activities, although some elementary schools reopened last fall. Maoist leaders probably have now concluded that younger students are not an effective instrument of revolution, are difficult to control, and are easily duped by opposition forces. In recent weeks "revolutionary rebels" used against Mao's opponents have been mainly older students and workers. Senior high schools and colleges apparently are to remain closed indefinitely.

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Congo (Kinshasa) - Belgium: Recent Congolese interference with the departure of Union Miniere personnel and their dependents will reduce what little remains of the company's willingness to help the Congo.

Union Miniere, whose intention to disengage from the Congo is becoming increasingly clear, has been rapidly moving out its personnel on scheduled flights, and in so doing it has incurred the wrath of both President Mobutu and local authorities in Katanga. The Katanga authorities, apparently with Kinshasa's approval, on 30 January prevented the departure of nearly 50 company employees and dependents. Mobutu countermanded the order the following day, but the damage has been done. Also on the 30th, Mobutu threatened to stop Sabena flights to Katanga and to move against Societe Generale, Union Miniere's parent company, if Union Miniere "provocations" resulted in a massive departure of European technicians.

Mobutu apparently is acting on the assumption that a recently proposed consortium to mine and market the Congo's copper will reduce Union Miniere's hold on the Congo's economy and that he thus can be more truculent with the company. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the consortium--which is to include Belgian and French interests and the two companies mining copper in Zambia--will not move into the Congo until the Congolese reach at least a measure of agreement with Union Miniere. Mobutu's moves against Union Miniere personnel and his secretiveness in his dealings with the consortium have angered the Belgian Government, which up to now has been pressing Union Miniere to make concessions. [REDACTED]

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